

## BOOK REVIEW

EDWARD D. CHURCHILL: *Wanderjahr: The Education of a Surgeon*. Edited and annotated by J. Gordon Scannell, M.D. 213 Pages with photographs. Canton, MA. The Francis A. Countway Library of Medicine, 1990, \$18.95.

EDWARD D. CHURCHILL, John Homans Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School (1931–1961), recounts his experiences as the Moseley Traveling fellow from 1926–1927, in these previously unpublished memoirs. This was an important year since it not only allowed Churchill to explore the possibilities of thoracic surgery, but also to observe, first hand, the pioneers of this rapidly expanding field. The first chapter of the book details Churchill's early biography and parallels the developments in surgery during that time.

His fellowship took him to the great surgical clinics of Europe. During his journey he divided his time between London, Berlin, Prague, Zurich, Bern, Heidelberg, Copenhagen, and Hamburg. He compared the educational and hierarchical systems of medicine of Europe to those in America. In Prague he studied anatomic dissections with Professor Ghon, observing the pathologic basis of tuberculosis. In Zurich he observed the legendary surgeon Ernst Sauerbruch, known for his leadership in the field of thoracic surgery. Especially interesting was his account of Sauerbruch's technique of early thoracic surgery. He described the method in which the lung could be exposed in an air-tight chamber allowing the surgeon and assistants to work while the patient was able to breathe spontaneously. As Sauerbruch's pupil he witnessed the evolution of the development of operations for pulmonary lobectomy. Most importantly, Churchill witnessed and brought back to Boston the method of positive pressure anesthesia. His personal accounts of how pre-War Nazi Germany affected medicine were interesting. After a vacation in the Bavarian Alps Churchill ventured on to Switzerland and visited with Professor de Quervain, Professor of Surgery in Bern. de Quervain was a student of Kocher and was quite adept at thyroid surgery. Before going to Copenhagen he observed Professor Leriche in Strasbourg. He then travelled on to Hamburg and studied with Professor Ludolf Brauer. Brauer was well known for his technique of thoracoplasty for the treatment of tuberculosis, a very common procedure during that time. Churchill then returned to London and visited with Professor Wilferd Trotter about whom he gives a very interesting account. Not only was he a gifted neurosurgeon, he also was a

prolific author. In his writing, Trotter gave a very lucid prediction of the development of Nazi Germany. In addition, an account of Trotter's operation on King George V for empyema was interesting in that, when a king was critically ill, decisions had to be passed through a panel of distinguished and aged consultants before any treatment could be given. This made it very difficult for the king to get up to date surgical care. Throughout his journey in Europe Churchill carried the shadow of Harvey Cushing with him. The often strained relationship between Harvey Cushing and Edward Churchill was evident in Dr. Churchill's memoirs.

At the completion of his traveling fellowship, Churchill married Mary Barton. He then returned to Boston and was given a laboratory at the Massachusetts General Hospital. Shortly thereafter, Churchill received the break that helped establish him as an operating surgeon. He performed the first successful pericardiectomy in the country for chronic constrictive pericarditis. In March of 1930 he was appointed professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School's Peter Bent Brigham Hospital. Churchill clearly became an established thoracic surgeon, becoming widely known for his treatment of tuberculosis with thoracoplasty and later with resection. The last chapters of the book complete Churchill's biography. In the late Fall 1953, Churchill suffered a severe stroke and in 1961 he retired to emeritus status. Shortly before his death in 1972 he published *Surgeon to Soldiers*. This was Churchill's diary as surgical consultant in North Africa during World War II.

The book ends with a very useful biographical register of all of the names mentioned in the text. *Wanderjahr* was a pleasure to read. The effects of the European clinics on the development of American surgery were well illustrated by Churchill's accounts. It is a wonderful addition to any surgeon's library, especially for students of medical history.

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